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OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Letter dated 8 April 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to inform you that the Rio +5 Forum, an important international event related to the review of the implementation of Agenda 21 and also to the informal preparation of the coming special session of the General Assembly on this issue, was held in Rio de Janeiro from 13 to 19 March 1997.

Since Brazil was the host country of the event, I would greatly appreciate it if the attached summary of the results of the Forum** could be issued as a document of the Assembly at its nineteenth special session.

(Signed) Celso L. N. AMORIM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
Brazil to the United Nations

* A/S-19/1 (to be issued).

** Attached in the language of submission only.

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ANNEX

Summary of the results of the Rio +5 Forum

1. This summary of the results of the Rio +5 Forum does not purport to be comprehensive. It represents the attempt by the Chairman to present the highlights of the Forum rather than his own personal views, and is supplemented by the more detailed reports that are available.

2. As a contribution to the fifth anniversary review of the results of the Earth Summit mandated by the General Assembly, the Earth Council, in cooperation with a broadly representative group of other organizations and stakeholders, convened the Rio +5 Forum in Rio de Janeiro from 13 to 19 March 1997. The Forum was honoured to have the participation of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil as Honourary Chairman, and the full support of his Government, as well as that of the State and the City of Rio de Janeiro and non-governmental organizations/business and other leaders of Brazilian society. Funding and substantive support from a number of other governmental and non-governmental sources made an indispensable contribution to the Forum.

3. The theme of the Rio +5 Forum was "Moving from Agenda to Action". It was the culmination of an ambitious year-long process designed to revitalize the sustainable development movement by building on the experience gained and lessons learned from the successes achieved since the Earth Summit and seek ways to remove the obstacles to action that continue to impede progress.

4. At the Earth Summit, countries of the world, most of them represented by their principal leaders, adopted a number of accords, principally the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 as the programme for giving effect to it, framework conventions on climate change and biological diversity, and a statement on forestry principles and laid the foundations for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. In addition, at the Global Forum, a number of "treaties" were agreed expressing the commitments of various sectors of civil society.

5. Five years later, it is apparent that despite these commitments and the accompanying publicity, the basic concept of sustainable development is not yet well understood and the policies and structures required to implement the Earth Summit agreements are still not in place. The good news is that there is a great deal of good news; the bad news is that there is not enough of it. Despite progress made on many fronts as evidenced at Rio +5, the world community has still not made the fundamental transition to a development pathway that will provide the human community with a sustainable and secure future. Environmental deterioration continues and the forces that drive it persist.

6. One of the major impediments to more progress is the fact that many of the organizations and individuals working for sustainability in their own communities and sectors continue to work largely in isolation from one another. Rio +5 was designed to bring together a representative group of these "actors", to help forge new links and alliances among them across disciplines, sectors,

and institutional and national boundaries so that their successes can be multiplied and they can combine efforts to remove and overcome barriers to the achievement of sustainable development.

7. In preparation for Rio +5, the Earth Council invited a broadly representative cross-section of stakeholders with expertise and involvement in sustainable development action to review their own experience and submit papers based on that experience on specific topics as background for the Forum and a contribution to the overall fifth anniversary review process. As it would not have been feasible to make participation in the Rio +5 Forum comprehensive, every effort was made to make it as representative as possible of key civil society actors and constituencies.

8. Parallel with this, Rio +5 partner organizations cooperated to set up a series of national and international multi-stakeholder consultations. This process produced more than 70 special focus reports and 80 reports from national and regional consultations, providing a rich and diverse source of information about progress, and lack of progress, in implementing the Earth Summit agreements, lessons learned from these experiences and crucial factors that drive and hinder implementation of sustainability. Thus, Rio +5 was not simply another meeting, but the focal point of a process designed to use this fifth anniversary review occasion as an opportunity to revitalize the action process, produce new alliances for action among civil society stakeholders and help stimulate renewed impetus to action on the part of Governments and intergovernmental organizations.

9. Against this background, the International Steering Committee for Rio +5, through the Earth Council, brought together in Rio de Janeiro some 500 knowledgeable and committed people from all parts of the world for six days of intensive plenary and workshop sessions. National Councils for Sustainable Development, of which some 100 have been established since the Earth Summit, constituted a primary constituency for the Forum and made an especially important contribution to it.

10. Participants brought with them an enormous range of experience in their national councils, in community-based organizations, local authorities, business and industry, science, technology and research institutes, non-governmental organization networks, financial institutions, United Nations development agencies, environmental organizations, private investors, philanthropic organizations, and values and educational groups. During the pre-Forum activities and at the Forum itself the Rio +5 process generated a rich harvest of action experiences and plans from many stakeholders featuring innovative and effective strategies to integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The results constitute a combination of new insights and reinforcement of past recommendations that have not been fully or adequately carried out, as well as new ideas and recommendations. There was a particular focus on the governance structures, legal and policy frameworks, financial support, and education and consultative processes required to translate promising ideas into action.

11. The Rio +5 process was admittedly a complex and demanding one. This was a deliberate attempt to recognize that the issues we must address if we are to

succeed in the transition to sustainable development are intrinsically complex and systemic in nature, and if we are to deal with them effectively our action and consultative processes must reflect that reality. The Rio +5 process was designed as an experiment in doing this, providing the framework for viewing on an integrated basis the linkages among the wide range of issues that must be managed interactively to produce sustainable development and dialogue among leading actors in respect of these issues. As consensus already exists at a general level on many key issues, the Forum concentrated on the diversity of perspectives and actions by various stakeholders. Its principal outputs were the substantive, in-depth insights, affirmations and recommendations emerging from the pre-Forum activities and the Forum workshops, the practical action alliances that were developed as a result of the process and the inputs to the deliberations of Governments that are reflected in the report of Rio +5, which is available together with the related documents to which reference has been made. These documents and the proceedings of Rio +5 are now available on the Earth Council's Internet Web site.

12. A copy of the summary version of the report Subsidizing Unsustainable Development - Undermining the Earth with Public Funds, prepared by the Institute for Research on Public Expenditure of the Netherlands commissioned by the Earth Council, with the support of the Government of the Netherlands, has recently been released and is also available.

13. Some of the major conclusions, actions by stakeholders and recommendations to Governments that emerged from the Rio +5 Forum are summarized below.

A. Major conclusions

14. There is a critical need for greater multi-stakeholder participation to integrate the social, economic and ecological dimensions of sustainable development into specific policies, programmes and actions.

15. Sustainable development is still predominantly the domain of environmental ministries. Other government departments, particularly those dealing with economic and social policy, must become involved. This has important implications for the Commission on Sustainable Development, which has made notable progress but needs to include more representatives of finance and economic ministries.

16. The principal driving forces of economic activity - unsustainable patterns of production and consumption in industrialized countries and population growth in developing countries - are still the major contributors to our current unsustainable course. North American participants declared that their current production and patterns are morally and ecologically unsustainable.

17. There is a need to address the fundamental ethical imperatives of sustainable development through the Earth Charter. A firm commitment on the part of all nations and peoples to a new integrated ethical vision is essential if humanity is to achieve the goal of sustainability and ensure the well-being of people and the larger community of life on Earth.

18. There is a need to make the difficult transition from managing sectoral issues to integrated management systems.

19. Governments are currently subsidizing unsustainable development ($700 billion a year in energy, agriculture and water alone). Large amounts of financial resources could become available for supporting sustainability if harmful subsidies are removed and positive incentives for sustainable development provided.

20. The information revolution is creating a new kind of impoverishment (Africa's capacity for electronic communication is growing at 6 per cent a year while the rate in Asia and Europe is about 20 per cent).

21. International accords are in danger of becoming external interventions unrelated to the organic needs of national and local communities in developing countries.

22. There are many successful cases of sustainable development practices which must be multiplied.

23. Local Agenda 21 efforts need to be better integrated with national Agenda 21 frameworks for sustainable development.

24. Private philanthropy and private investment, which are now the main source of development resources, must be better focused and integrated in an efficient delivery system for sustainable development.

25. The current United Nations system is not able to enforce compliance with international accords, which must be more deeply rooted in local and national support.

B. Major actions and affirmations by stakeholders

26. Agreement was reached at the first meeting of the Earth Charter Commission on a "benchmark" draft Earth Charter to be used as the basis for extensive dialogue and consultations by people and organizations throughout the world to produce a "people's" Earth Charter, which would be submitted to the United Nations for appropriate recognition and action by Governments in the year 2000. It builds on the Declarations of Stockholm and Rio and the many other processes that have produced relevant ethical statements, particularly the Covenant of the World Conservation Union. A copy of this benchmark draft and summary report of the Earth Charter Commission meeting is available.

27. It is encouraging to note that World Environment Day celebrations in Seoul on this anniversary year will focus especially on the issue of environmental ethics.

28. All participants affirmed their commitment to ensuring the mainstreaming of gender issues, full participation of youth in all sustainable development processes as well as special measures to ensure the participation of indigenous

peoples and the mobilization of support for the issues of particular concern to them.

29. Participants affirmed the priority that must be accorded to eliminating the dire and debilitating poverty that continues to afflict so many of the world's people and to the incorporation of specific measures to ensure this in sustainable development policies and practices.

30. The nearly 70 consultations organized by civil society actors in partnership with Governments (in most cases National Councils for Sustainable Development or similar multi-stakeholder groups) produced a number of specific affirmations and recommendations for national and local sustainable development, including the following:

(a) Commitment by the President of the World Bank and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme in support of civil society participation in sustainable development through National Councils for Sustainable Development;

(b) Affirmation by the World Travel and Tourism Council, in collaboration with the World Tourism Organization and the Earth Council, of their Agenda 21 for the travel and tourism industry;

(c) Affirmation by the World Federation of Engineering Organizations of their commitment to integrate and support sustainable development principles in their professional work, complemented by their report on the engineers' response to sustainable development;

(d) On the initiative of Energy 21, initiation of a campaign to enlist at least 1 million communities worldwide in programmes to improve energy efficiency by 25 per cent or more by the year 2001;

(e) Initiation of a process for improved consultation and cooperation among governmental and private donors to provide new and more effective financial support for local and national sustainable development initiatives;

(f) Development of a framework and enhanced linkages to facilitate cooperation and consultation among the growing network of National Councils for Sustainable Development and the establishment and strengthening of regional alliances, as for example in Central America and the Southern Cone countries of South America and in Asia as a parallel forum to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum;

(g) Examples from the World Business Council for Sustainable Development of progress by business in practical actions to implement sustainable development and affirmation of its commitment to continued progress as evidenced by the signing at Rio +5 of a memorandum of agreement between the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Development Programme;

(h) Affirmation by the International Road Transport Union of the commitment of its members to a sustainable development charter based on Agenda 21;

(i) Agreement signed in Rio de Janeiro between community-based initiatives of the Joint Institute for Social Aid (IMAS), located in Costa Rica, and the Earth Council;

(j) Affirmation of civil society support for the United Nations Environment Programme as a basis for a strengthened world environmental organization within the United Nations with a status equivalent to an international economic and trade organization;

(k) Affirmation of the value and importance of continuing on a periodic basis, global consultations among civil society actors for sustainable development building on the Rio +5 experience and the proposal made by the Mayor of Rio de Janeiro for the establishment of a Rio forum.

C. Recommendations to Governments and others

31. Specific recommendations for implementing sustainability emerged from the working sessions at the Rio +5 Forum. Like the recommendations for managing the various subsystems of sustainable development that were submitted in more than 70 technical papers and 80 national and subregional consultations, they were based on the experience of attempting to implement sustainability.

32. A primary need identified by the Forum is to provide better mechanisms and policy instruments for translating the agreements reached at Rio and subsequent experience and recommendations into effective action at local, national and sectoral levels. They must be transformed into a more coherent and consistent set of policies, legal frameworks, fiscal and budgetary processes, institutional mechanisms, and communication and educational programmes. To support the establishment and strengthening of these mechanisms, the following is a summary of the principal recommendations made:

(a) That the United Nations and Governments take note of and lend support to the civil society Earth Charter process. The Earth Council Commission, at its first meeting, agreed on a "benchmark" Earth Charter draft to be a focal point for the extensive dialogue and consultations that will now be undertaken by civil society groups throughout the world;

(b) That Governments facilitate and support formation of multi-stakeholder mechanisms to develop local Agendas 21;

(c) In particular, that Governments support the further establishment and strengthening of National Councils for Sustainable Development and similar mechanisms to develop and implement national Agendas 21 that link local with national sustainability actions and contribute to regional and global cooperation;

(d) That Governments and international organizations support the establishment by National Councils for Sustainable Development of regional forums to contribute to the incorporation of sustainable development measures in regional trade and investment accords;

(e) That international development agencies and financial institutions develop new and more effective delivery systems to ensure local and national sustainability and the democratic and transparent use of resources;

(f) That despite current budgetary austerity, donor Governments and agencies provide new and additional concessional funding required to support the transition to sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21 by developing countries, particularly the least developed;

(g) That the Global Environment Facility be replenished at a higher level with an expanded mandate;

(h) That the United Nations and its Member States provide full and strong support to the United Nations Environment Programme and to building on its foundations a world environment organization with more effective monitoring, assessment and early warning functions as the bridge between science, policy and international law in the environment field, the principal source of the environmental dimension of the sustainable development nexus and the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, with a status and strength equivalent to that of the international economic and trade organizations. The Nairobi Declaration provides a promising starting point for this and the measures at the resumed session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to establish new mechanisms to carry out its governance functions should also prove to be a positive step in this direction;

(i) That the General Assembly make provision for appropriate participation in its deliberative and negotiating processes to all relevant major stakeholders which can contribute to the formation of international accords and facilitate support for their national and local implementation;

(j) That industrialized countries agree at the forthcoming meetings of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent from 1990 levels by the year 2005;

(k) That corporations be more accountable to the communities in which they operate as well as to society in general;

(l) That Governments initiate a negotiating process to establish a global framework for the regulation of international capital flows;

(m) That Governments agree to review and reorient the system of incentives and subsidies by which they motivate the economic behaviour of corporations and citizens to eliminate subsidies and other incentives that encourage and support unsustainable development practices, particularly in respect of energy, transport, agriculture and water, and provide positive incentives for the achievement of sustainability.

Appendix

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Rio +5 process yielded a number of accomplishments, examples of which are listed below:

1. Local/national sustainability

- Nearly 70 consultations organized by civil society in partnership with Governments (in most cases National Councils for Sustainable Development or similar multi-stakeholder groups) made specific recommendations for national and local sustainable development.

- All participants affirmed their commitment to ensuring the mainstreaming of gender issues, full participation of youth in all sustainable development processes, as well as special measures to ensure the participation of indigenous peoples and the mobilization of support for the issues of particular concern to them.

- Commitment by the President of the World Bank and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to support civil society participation in National Councils for Sustainable Development.

- Initiation of a process for improved consultation and cooperation among governmental and private donors to provide new and more effective support for local and national sustainable development initiatives.

- Publication of the results of an extensive consultation process carried out for Rio +5 by the Brazilian Non-Governmental Organization Forum.

- Agreement between community-based initiatives of the Joint Institute for Social Aid (IMAS), located in Costa Rica, and the Earth Council.

2. Regional sustainability

- Consolidation of a growing network, currently comprising 71 National Councils for Sustainable Development, making use of the opportunity presented by Rio +5 to form regional alliances for sustainable development such as strengthening of the Central American alliance for sustainable development. An NGO-initiated alliance for sustainable development among the Southern Cone countries of South America.

- Commitment of National Councils for Sustainable Development of the Central and Eastern European region to create an alliance for sustainable development to facilitate multi-stakeholder participation in the countries that are still not involved in the process of developing National Councils.

- An NGO-initiated agreement to organize a civil society national council for sustainable development forum in Asia as a parallel forum to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum.

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3. Global sustainability

- More than 20 key organizations have committed to conduct a widespread consultation on the Earth Charter draft. An Earth Charter Commission has been established and a draft Earth Charter prepared for review and consultation.

- Participants affirmed the priority that must be accorded to eliminate the dire debilitating poverty that continues to afflict so many of the world's people and to the incorporation of specific measures to ensure this priority in sustainable development policies and practices.

- Agenda 21 for the travel and tourism industry, affirmed by the World Travel and Tourism Council, in collaboration with the World Tourism Organization and the Earth Council, was endorsed by workshop participants.

- The World Federation of Engineering Organizations pledged to integrate and support sustainable development principles in accomplishing their work. This complemented their report on the engineers' response to sustainable development.

- An energy non-governmental organization, Energy 21, produced in-depth research supporting the vital role sustainable energy use must play in achieving sustainability. It also initiated a campaign for 1 million communities worldwide to improve energy efficiency by at least 25 per cent or to substitute environmentally friendly solutions for conventional energy, by the year 2001.

- The World Business Council for Sustainable Development summarized its actions to implement sustainability in the report Signals of Change: Business Progress Towards Sustainable Development. In addition, a memorandum of agreement between the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Development Programme was signed.

- Affirmation by the International Road Transport Union of the commitment of its members to a sustainable development charter based on Agenda 21.

- Affirmation of civil society support for the United Nations Environment Programme as a basis for a strengthened world environmental organization within the United Nations with a status equivalent to an international economic and trade organization.

- Affirmation of the value and importance of continuing, on a periodic basis, global consultations among civil society actors for sustainable development building on the Rio +5 Forum and the proposal made by the Mayor of Rio de Janeiro for the establishment of a Rio forum.

- Initiation of discussions on an ombudsman-like function for sustainable development based on an in-depth study tabled at the Forum.

MANAGING SYSTEMS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Recommendations

At the local level

Social development

- Make the links clear between health, poverty eradication and sustainable development strategies within the local Agenda 21 process.
- Ensure the affordability of basic services, including energy, water and transportation, and use economic instruments to discourage the wasteful and unsustainable use of these resources.
- Fund participatory research to define and clarify sustainable development and identify social, economic and environmental problems and responses at the community level.
- Develop local strategies to assist migrants, the urban poor and other marginalized groups to adapt themselves to their new urban environments.
- Integrate science and traditional and indigenous knowledge for local management of sustainable development.
- Create a social development fund.
- Establish mechanisms to involve youth at the school, neighbourhood and local government level to contribute new ideas to the government process while educating young people about their social and environmental responsibilities.
- Fund mass media campaigns to promote responsible consumption and sustainable living to counteract advertising that stresses consumerism as synonymous with development, progress and achievement.
- Develop new methodologies to identify common interests as an alternative to solving problems in an adversarial way.

Ecosystems and natural resources

- Involve community organizations in the management of national parks and other protected areas.
- Support local people to carry out biodiversity inventories and remunerate the holders of traditional knowledge for their collaboration in protection and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- Monitor and publicize local sources of pollution.
- Create multi-stakeholder bodies for local land-use planning, including a monitoring and evaluation component, and link this to planning at the

national level particularly in natural resource areas such as mining, forestry, fisheries and agriculture.

- Seek out new opportunities for community-managed sustainable ecotourism ensuring that the local inhabitants receive a significant share of the benefits. Implement Agenda 21 for travel and tourism.

- Use non-governmental organizations to channel government and external donor funding, including national and international philanthropy, into local development programmes.

- Focus municipal development programme assistance on capacity-building for municipal finance.

- Develop small micro and medium-sized enterprise credit programmes including micro-credit banks based on indigenous knowledge, with private, public and donor funding that supports economically and environmentally viable micro-projects at the community level.

- Develop mechanisms to encourage business to reinvest in local communities.

- Ensure consumer protection and establish legal mechanisms to make institutions liable for the environmental damages that they cause locally.

- Strengthen the financing and revenue-generating capacities of local governments.

Energy

- Establish international protocols among local governments for energy efficiency and waste minimization.

- Campaign for 1 million communities worldwide to improve energy efficiency by at least 25 per cent.

- Strengthen the financing and revenue-generating capacities of local governments.

Agriculture

- Create partnerships between small-scale farmers, women producers and local organizations to achieve sustainable agriculture and food security and encourage diversity of local production.

- Refocus agriculture subsidies to provide incentives for sustainable agriculture practices and to discourage high-input farming.

- Develop programmes to ensure that local and community producers receive a fair share of the proceeds of regional and international trade.

- Build capacity for subsidies and small-scale farmers, particularly women producers, to enhance their opportunities for achieving sustainable livelihoods, including access to credit.

- Review and revise local land-use controls in order to protect agricultural lands and assets.

Science and technology

- Form North-South and South-South community partnerships within the context of local Agenda 21 strategies to share unique knowledge and technologies of all cultures and societies.

Human settlements

- Integrate the Habitat Agenda into local Agenda 21 action plans.

- Design, build and renew sustainable habitats with services such as access to clean water and primary health care.

- Establish local recycling and solid liquid waste minimization programmes.

- Change parking and tax policies to favour the use of public transport and an increase in the use of low-emission vehicles in the transport of goods within and between cities.

- Encourage partnerships between Governments at all levels with civil society.

- Support women's role in human settlements, development and management.

- Support the provisions of micro-lending for shelter improvement.

- Support more equitable access to land to enable the poor to participate in the creation of their own shelter.

- Extend basic urban services to informal settlements.

- Support capacity-building and technical assistance.

- Establish and monitor local targets for environmental health in cities and towns, especially in low-income areas.

Information and communication

- Enable communities to take advantage of information and communication technologies in order to achieve local sustainable development goals.

- Establish networks for the dissemination of effective policies, technologies and approaches to local sustainable development.

- Make an inventory of sustainable development success stories and use local media to publicize them.

- Collect complete technical and financial information about ongoing community projects in a data bank and make it available to local authorities, community groups and non-governmental organizations looking to start their own sustainable development projects or programmes.

- Use mass media programming and advertising in campaigns to raise public awareness about sustainable development.

United Nations agencies, the World Bank, bilateral donors/philanthropy foundations and the Earth Council should prepare a project to undertake an integrated review in selected countries of local, subnational and national legal and fiscal frameworks in order to support the implementation of local sustainable development strategies.

At the national level

Ecosystems and natural resources

- Shift taxation from incomes and payrolls to overuse of natural resources to fill budget shortfalls and move societies towards frill-cost pricing and ecologically sound corporate and individual behaviour.

- Incorporate ecological footprint approach as natural capital accounts to complement gross domestic product, documenting ecological risks and social equity.

- Use a planning approach that links environment and development; conduct environmental impact assessments to determine sustainability of projects at the national level.

- Develop multi-agency programmes to address specific environmental challenges.

Economic development and financial systems

- Reform economic incentive/subsidies that promote unsustainable practices, especially in energy, water, road transport and agriculture.

- Eliminate wasteful and/or harmful subsidies and incentives.

- Adopt a set of uniform sustainability indicators at the national level, e.g., Bellagio principles, as the key elements of a project's credit analysis.

- Mobilize national and international philanthropy and charitable organizations in support of sustainable development.

- Set up mechanisms to facilitate access of non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and local authorities to available national and international funding sources.

- Promote win-win strategies by investing in people, particularly women, to promote efficient use of resources.

- Create national environmental funds using government-backed bonds.

- Tax individuals and industry based on the size of their greenhouse gas emissions.

Social development

- Integrate sustainable development principles in national education curricula at all levels, identify and support programmes for incorporating sustainable livelihoods into mainstream employment priorities.

- Involve consumers in certification of the environmental quality of products and bring civil society inputs into the setting of national standards for certification.

- Create and administer a national people's Earth fund to serve as a central conduit, performing supportive functions and promoting an exchange of mutual assistance among similar community-level friends.

- Collect statistics for early warning of environmental health problems.

- Identify and publicize national sources of persistent organic pollutants and other toxic dangers.

- Include the concept of sustainable development in negotiations on social security and employment.

- Incorporate land and gender into national policy structures.

Energy

- Raise fossil fuel prices to reflect the frill cost of problems caused by motor vehicles, e.g., pollution, accidents and congestion.

- Suppress asymmetrical subsidies, soft loans, tax breaks and other incentives for conventional and nuclear fuels.

- Include external costs in planning for any energy investment.

- Shift towards environmentally safe, efficient and cost-effective energy sources using, in particular, renewable and clean technologies.

- Implement energy-efficiency programmes together with all supply-side investment.

- Negotiate a legally binding agreement at Kyoto in December 1997 to address the threat of climate change, including clear and viable targets and timetables for the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions.

Science and technology

- Set up a database for results of past research on science and technology for sustainable development.

- Remove impediments to the sharing of environmentally superior technologies and build capacity for technological adaptation.

- Create environmental technology investment corporations.

Human settlements

- Develop low-cost and integrated housing programmes offering long-term credit to families and interest rates lower than the market and according to family income.

- Encourage better governance and management of human settlements.

- Encourage the development and use of local building materials.

- Encourage the development of best practices and enable the sharing of successful experiences.

- Encourage the development of indicators and benchmarks to allow for the monitoring and evaluation of projects.

Information and communication

- Invest in the Internet capacity as the most economical way of narrowing the information gap between rich and poor.

- Use the Internet and mass media programming and advertising in campaigns to raise public awareness about sustainable development.

- Reinforce civil society's leadership role in the effective use of information and communication technology for sustainable development.

At the regional level

Ecosystems and natural resources

- Enter partnerships to interpret and apply global environmental accords in the regional context.

- Strengthen environmental standards and ensure their effective implementation throughout a region.

- Take a bioregional approach to ecosystem management, especially for critical transboundary issues like water and nomadic livestock systems.

Economic development and financial systems

- Research and publicize the adverse impact of regional trade agreements and ensure effective people's participatory decision-making, transparency and effective monitoring of all aspects of regional trade and investment.

- Impose effective constraints, including a code of conduct, on the operations of transnational corporations to ensure their accountability and responsibility to the people of the region.

- Ensure that regional trade agreements have the mandate and institutional mechanisms to ensure sustainable development.

- Create a rural women's fund supported by the African Development Bank and the Inter-Arab Bank.

- Consolidate regional planning in relation to the pardon and/or exchange of debt negotiated in previous agreements, particularly the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative which permits an 80 per cent reduction in debt if sustainable development is undertaken.

At the global level

- Improve the effectiveness of the implementation of global accords through education, training and enhanced access to information.

- Use clear and precise language in international agreements to avoid ambiguity in interpretation and the resultant delay in implementation.

- Support quality environmental journalism to strengthen implementation of sustainable development global accords.

- Strengthen collaboration among developing and industrialized country non-governmental organizations for implementation of sustainable development global accords.

- Eliminate duplication of programmes and activities among international secretariats for sustainable development global accords.

- Focus attention on climate change mitigation as a priority by calling upon Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for a 20 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2005 for industrialized countries (from 1990 levels). Those countries should also adopt financial mechanisms for greenhouse gas offsets.

- Assess efforts by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development to adopt a multilateral agreement on investment with a view to ensuring that new rules for promoting foreign direct investment do not undermine

legitimate environmental and sustainable development policies at the national, regional and international levels.

- Promote sustainable development impact assessments by coalitions of non-governmental organizations and industry of the implementation and further elaboration of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

- Ensure that the social and economic benefits associated with the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity are directed towards the world's poor and to the creation of genetic banks, particularly in situ, for future generations.

- Conduct public consultation with regard to the local and international implications of implementing international agreements and accords.

- Hold an annual international forum at the United Nations to facilitate the genuine participation of civil society, Governments and business to review and monitor progress in the implementation of Agenda 21.

- Support and contribute to the implementation of the recommendations of the major United Nations conferences.

International agencies

- Ensure participation of representatives of civil society as observers and providers of expertise in the policy-making institutions of the World Trade Organization and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

- Ensure that World Trade Organization rules promote and do not undermine legitimate environmental and sustainable development policies at the national, regional and international levels, including trade-related measures in multilateral environmental agreements.

- Expand and strengthen the role of the United Nations Environment Programme to promote the coherent implementation and monitoring of the environmental dimensions of sustainable development within the United Nations system and reassess the roles of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme in environmental technology and capacity-building.

- Take urgent action to ensure the financial security of the United Nations Environment Programme and to resolve the current governance crisis.

Trade and finance

- Create partnerships between non-governmental organizations and national Governments to monitor and evaluate the link between sustainable development and global trade, particularly World Trade Organization issues.

- Establish an intergovernmental panel in trade under the Commission on Sustainable Development.

- Develop and adopt codes of conduct for international business that include a commitment to conduct all operations openly and to the strictest standards they encounter in any country.

- Seek new financial mechanisms to support sustainable development objectives, e.g., tradable permits, taxes on financial transactions (Tobin tax), and taxes on fuel used in all international aviation, including military.

- Increase official development assistance tc 0.7 per cent of gross national product and monitor flows to ensure compatibility with Agenda 21 mandates.

- Direct existing and enhanced levels of funding towards sustainable development objectives, including robust replenishment of the Global Environment Facility and the International Development Association and financing the United Nations Development Programme's Capacity 21.

- Review mandates of international organizations to ensure their consistency.

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OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Letter dated 23 April 1997 from the representatives of the Netherlands and Paraguay to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to bring to your attention the Noordwijk Declaration of the VIIth Institutionalized Ministerial Meeting Rio Group-European Union of 7 and 8 April 1997 (see annex).**

Among other things, the declaration underlines the need to promote sustainable development by consolidating both the needs of economic growth and the preservation of the environment.

As President of the Council of the European Union in New York and as Rio Group Coordinator in New York, respectively, we kindly request that the Noordwijk Declaration and the present letter be distributed as official United Nations documents in the context of the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21.

(Signed) Nicolaas H. BIEGMAN
Permanent Representative of the
Kingdom of the Netherlands to the
United Nations

(Signed) Ramon A. DÍAZ-PEREIRA
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Mission of Paraguay to the
United Nations

* A/S-19/1 (to be issued).

** The document is being circulated in the languages of submission only.

ANNEX

[Original: English and Spanish]

VIIth INSTITUTIONALIZED MINISTERIAL MEETING
RIO GROUP – EUROPEAN UNION
7 and 8 April 1997

Noordwijk Declaration

INTRODUCTION

1. The VIIth ministerial meeting of the Rio Group and the European Union, institutionalized in the Rome Declaration of 20 December 1990, was held in the city of Noordwijk on 7 and 8 April 1997, in accordance with the Declaration of the VIth ministerial meeting held in Cochabamba on 15 and 16 April 1996.

Political Dialogue

2. Ministers emphasized the considerable progress within the framework of the political dialogue between the two regions, as initiated by the Rome Declaration and consolidated by the ministerial meetings in Luxembourg, Santiago de Chile, Copenhagen, Sao Paulo, Paris and Cochabamba.

3. Ministers acknowledged the importance of the two regions' historical, cultural, political and economic relations and the shared values and ideals of respect for human rights and the rule of law which underpin the institutionalized political dialogue and direct the cooperation between both parties.

4. They reaffirmed their governments' commitment to the validity of representative democracy, political pluralism and full association of civil society in the political decision-making process and their firm determination to ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

They reiterated their governments' commitment to good governance, to consolidate and strengthen public institutions as effective instruments of the rule of law and, in this context, they agreed to strengthen their cooperation.

In this context, they underlined the need to promote education for democracy thereby encouraging the development of a political culture which can help to strengthen the democratic principles and values on which our political systems are based. Ministers also reaffirmed their satisfaction with existing cooperation between the two regions in this field and expressed their willingness to step up cooperation and exchange of existing experience in this area as a fundamental contribution to the full consolidation and elaboration of democracy.

5. Ministers expressed their satisfaction at the dialogue recently established on confidence and security building measures between the Rio Group and the European Union. They stated that the seminars held in Punta del Este in 1995 and in Quito in November 1996 had served to intensify the exchange of views and further strengthen relations in this area.

Ministers agreed to continue to exchange information and experience in order to consolidate a climate of confidence which would make it possible to reduce the risks of conflicts and reinforce peace and security, respecting international law and treaties. They decided to hold a further seminar in Bolivia in the second half of 1997, which would submit specific proposals for cooperation in this field.

6. Ministers strongly condemned all acts of terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, as criminal and unjustifiable, wherever and by whomsoever committed.

They underlined their joint commitment to fighting this scourge, which undermines peaceful co-existence and impairs the rule of law. They urged all States to ratify the relevant international conventions.

Ministers underlined the importance of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 51/210 and they stressed the need further to strengthen their cooperation, as well as with other States, in order to prevent, combat and eliminate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

7. Ministers furthermore repeated their condemnation of all forms of racism and xenophobia, which constitute an assault on the dignity and the fundamental rights of the human being.

8. Ministers welcomed the signing of a Firm and Lasting Peace Accord in Guatemala on 29 December 1996 between the Government of Guatemala and the URNG guerrillas. They invited both parties to observe the substance of the commitments made in the Agreements signed. They expressed satisfaction at the results achieved at the meeting of the Consultative Group for Guatemala held in Brussels in January 1997.

9. Ministers emphasized the importance of the interparliamentary political dialogue between both regions and advocated intensifying it.

10. The European Union and the Rio Group have common views on many global issues. Recalling their agreement in Cochabamba to continue to develop the dialogue within the framework of the United Nations, Ministers agreed to explore at all levels the scope for bringing closer together the positions of the two regions and the possibilities for cooperation on matters of mutual interest in international fora.

    Ministers agreed to meet in New York on the occasion of the 52nd United Nations General Assembly.

11. Ministers noted the progress achieved in the economic integration process and political cooperation, both in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in Europe. This process should create a climate conducive to economic development and further rapprochement within each region.

12. Ministers welcomed the progress made between Latin America and the EU, in particular through the prompt implementation of the new agreements with Mercosur and Chile, as well as the work in progress towards a new agreement with Mexico, the institutionalization of the political dialogue between the EU and the Andean Community, and the positive outcome of the San José XIIIth Ministerial Conference between the EU and Central America and of the IVth High Level Economic and Commercial Meeting between the EU and the Rio Group.

13. Ministers reiterated their firm political will to continue to promote institutionalization of these processes of subregional and bilateral rapprochement and welcomed the implementation of the instruments and mechanisms provided for therein.

14. The Ministers expressed their interest in the proposals for a Summit of Heads of State and Government in order to strengthen relations between the two regions.

Sustainable Development

15. Ministers emphasized the necessity of promoting sustainable development which encompasses economic, social and technological as well as environmental dimensions and reconciles the needs of economic growth and preservation of the environment. In this regard, they recalled their perception of sustainable development, as reflected in the Cochabamba Declaration.

    They stressed that sustainable development was a comprehensive concept, implying human empowerment, the reduction of social differences and poverty alleviation within a democratic framework. They also expressed concern at the continuing deterioration of the global environment, including worsening trends in environmental pollution and the degradation of natural resources.

16. Recalling the results of the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, Ministers stressed that the fight against poverty and social exclusion constitutes a basic objective of both regions. They expressed support for measures and actions aimed at improving conditions of less-favoured groups of society, including indigenous communities. They also underlined in this context their willingness to promote women's rights and equal participation in decision-making processes in accordance with the agreements adopted at the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing. In particular as regards the areas of health, education, housing and employment, Ministers agreed to encourage cooperation projects based on an integrated approach and directed towards sustainable development.

17. They emphasized the private sector's important contribution to the attainment of sustained economic growth and agreed on the importance of creating incentives for economic activities compatible with the strategy of sustainable development.

18. Reaffirming their support for the follow-up to the conclusions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, they expressed their confidence that the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly to be held in June 1997 will be an opportunity to restate the political will in favour of sustainable development and the fulfilment of the principles and commitments of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21. They expressed their satisfaction at the activities undertaken within the context of the Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biodiversity, the Convention on Combating Desertification and the Montreal Protocol on Ozone Depleting Substances, as well as of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests. In this regard, they agreed also to collaborate closely at the future Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly and to secure follow-up of the commitments made.

19. Ministers also underlined the importance of implementing the respective commitments made at the Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, the World Food Summit in Rome in November 1996 and the Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul. They pointed, moreover, to the substantial contributions by the Summit of the Americas for Sustainable Development held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia) in December 1996 and its action plan.

In this connection, they underlined the need for support and cooperation at bilateral, multilateral, regional and subregional levels to make it possible to implement action in the abovementioned areas.

Ministers stressed that sustainable development should become a matter of long-term importance in the dialogue between the EU and the Rio Group. They agreed to strengthen their dialogue in this respect to facilitate closer collaboration in the appropriate international fora.

In this context, they welcomed the fact that a seminar on this subject was held in the Netherlands, in February 1997, under the Dutch Presidency, organized by IRELA. Ministers agreed that this seminar had been a good opportunity to exchange information and opinions and it may be repeated in the future.

Economy, trade and cooperation

20. Ministers emphasized their commitment to apply the principles of multilateralism in their trade relations; they expressed their resolve to strengthen the WTO as the appropriate forum for resolving trade disputes.

In that connection, Ministers reiterated their firm rejection of any unilateral measure, having extraterritorial effect contrary to international law and to established free trade rules. They agreed that such practices pose a great threat to multilateralism.

21. They expressed satisfaction at the positive cooperation established between both regions at the first World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Meeting held in Singapore in December 1996 and restated their willingness to implement all the commitments made during the Uruguay Round and the urgent need of successfully completing the remaining negotiations.

In this connection, they agreed that there should be consideration of the special and differential treatment in favour of developing countries as already established in the WTO Agreement.

22. Ministers acknowledged the fact that both regions agreed on the principles of open regionalism and multilateralism; they also emphasized that regional integration should be supported when it is a means of ensuring that developing countries are harmoniously and progressively brought into the global economy and that lasting growth is achieved.

23. As regards bi-regional trade relations, they noted with satisfaction the fact that Latin America and the Caribbean has emerged as one of the most dynamic markets for the European Union. The European Union likewise continues to be one of the most important markets for Latin America and the Caribbean. With regard to the trade deficit which Latin America has had with the European Union since 1993, they undertook to endeavour to analyze means by which trade exchanges could be increased.

24. Ministers stressed the results of the IVth High Level Economic and Commercial Meeting held in Brussels in November 1996, and confirmed the importance of this special forum for continuous dialogue in exchanging points of view on topics of interest to both regions.

Ministers accordingly agreed to convene the Vth High Level Economic and Commercial Meeting to take place in the second half of 1997.

25. Ministers pointed to the role played by investment in their mutual relations and repeated their undertaking to foster initiatives aimed at increasing investments, including the signing of bilateral double taxation agreements, as well as bilateral investment promotion and protection agreements. In this connection, the Ministers stressed the importance of the protection of intellectual property . They expressed satisfaction at the growing importance of the Latin American region as a magnet for direct foreign investment and pointed to the mutual advantage of increased European participation in the process.

They also noted the growth in foreign investment in the Latin American region, a trend which had been maintained in 1996, with the European Union being one of the major investors in the region.

26. Ministers expressed their support for the work on investments carried out by the World Trade Organization with the support of UNCTAD and for the setting up of working groups on investments and competition policy within the WTO.

27. Ministers welcomed the holding of the Seminar on the "Impact of non-regulated capital movement in the relations between the European Union and the Rio Group", held in Rome on 6 and 7 May 1996.

28. Ministers expressed their satisfaction at the projects carried out in Latin America by the European Investment Bank in the first three years, and at renewal of its mandate to continue its operations in the region.

In this connection they expressed their interest in the EIB increasing its activities in Latin America.

29. Ministers recognized the importance of the cooperation between the European Union and the Rio Group. The European Union is the main cooperation partner in Latin America and the Caribbean, and they agreed to strengthen and step up this cooperation, taking into account the special circumstances of each country and focusing on the needs of the poorest populations. In particular, they emphasized horizontal cooperation programmes, such as AL-INVEST, ECIP, AL-URE, URB-AL, as well as the ALFA academic and scientific exchange programme. They likewise expressed their confidence that the criteria for such cooperation would be accorded by both sides.

30. They again acknowledged the CEFIR programme in the field of regional integration, expressed satisfaction that the project had been prolonged for a further two years and stressed the relevance of establishing the mechanisms permitting it to continue and expand its work.

31. They emphasized that cooperation in science and technology is an important element in the dialogue between the two regions. In this respect, they agreed to step up their participation in the forthcoming Vth Framework Programme on Research and Development, taking into account reciprocal interests, to promote scientific cooperation of excellence, favouring the insertion of the Latin American countries in global economy and increasing the presence of European companies in Latin America. They welcomed the dialogue between the two regions started at the Madrid Conference in October 1995 and agreed that it should be continued, taking into account the priorities of the Rio Group and guaranteeing improved access to scientific and technical cooperation of excellence.

32. Ministers welcomed the progress achieved in Latin American and Caribbean energy integration and promised to step up efforts to enlarge energy cooperation between the European Union and the countries of the Rio Group with a view to fostering free trade and intra-regional investment.

Cooperation in the fight against drugs

33. Ministers considered that the principles of co-responsibility and international cooperation are essential in dealing effectively with problems with global implications such as the fight against drugs, organized crime and money-laundering. These problems require concerted solutions involving multilateral engagements and commitments by all the parties concerned.

34. Within the framework of the principle of co-responsibility accepted by both regions, Ministers underlined the importance of continuing to intensify the high level dialogue on drugs, including the specialized dialogue between the EU and the Andean Community, and their willingness to step up cooperation in this field, including by implementing the agreements already signed on chemical precursors. They took note with satisfaction of the conclusions of the Dublin European Council of 1996.

35. They welcomed the extraordinary session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, to be held during 1998 with the objective of discussing the problem of illegal drugs; they stressed their commitment to work for a successful outcome to this meeting, with a view to reiterating the will of the international community, as set out in UN Resolution 51/64, to fight drugs including by implementing the existing global strategy, the UN global plan of action.

36. In order to intensify this cooperation, ministers agreed on the holding of a meeting of experts during 1997 within the framework of the EU-Rio Group dialogue.

37. Ministers expressed their gratitude to the people and the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for their hospitality and for the organization which had made a success of the VIIth Institutionalized Ministerial Meeting between the Rio Group and the European Union.

38. Ministers thanked the Government of Panama for its offer to host the VIIIth Institutionalized Ministerial Meeting between the Rio Group and the European Union on 12-13 February 1998.

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Nineteenth special session
Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly, pursuant to Assembly resolution 50/113 of 20 December 1995, the attached decision III/19 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The annex to the decision contains a statement from the Conference of the Parties to the Assembly at its special session.

2. The information referred to in paragraph 2 of the decision was transmitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifth session (see E/CN.17/1997/21), which will also be made available to the Assembly.

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* A/S-19/1, to be issued.

DECISION III/19 OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Special session of the General Assembly to review implementation of Agenda 21

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the relevant chapters of Agenda 21,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 50/113, which invited the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to provide inputs to the special session of the General Assembly to review progress in implementing Agenda 21,

Recognizing the importance of the special session of the General Assembly in 1997 to review progress made to date in the implementation of Agenda 21,

Mindful of the role of the Convention on Biological Diversity in promoting sustainable development, and reaffirming its commitment to the three objectives of the Convention,

1. Requests the President of the Conference of the Parties to transmit the annexed statement from the Conference of the Parties to the special session of the General Assembly in 1997;

2. Also requests the Executive Secretary to provide to the special session of the General Assembly and to the preparatory process such information related to activities and developments under the Convention as may be required, including the reports of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

Annex

STATEMENT FROM THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY TO THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity takes this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the three objectives of the Convention, namely the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

A. The Convention on Biological Diversity and Agenda 21

2. The Conference of the Parties emphasizes the significance of the Convention, and activities carried out in implementation of the Convention, to the achievement of goals set out in many of the chapters of Agenda 21. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without the sustainable use of the world's biological diversity. The Convention provides a set of legally binding commitments and is an important tool for translating the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21 into concrete actions.

3. The Convention on Biological Diversity entered into force on 29 December 1993. The Conference of the Parties, at its first three meetings, adopted a number of decisions aimed at elaborating and implementing the provisions of the Convention. The Convention adopts an ecosystem approach, both in its provisions and in its programme of work. The integration of biological diversity considerations into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies is central to the Convention. In addition, the Conference of the Parties attaches particular importance to cooperation with other biological diversity-related conventions, institutions and processes.

4. The Conference of the Parties recognizes that biological diversity is a cross-cutting issue. The provisions of the Convention are of the utmost relevance to a number of the issues reviewed by the Commission on Sustainable Development to date, including: the planning and management of land resources; combating deforestation; managing fragile ecosystems; promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development; and consideration of marine and coastal biological diversity.

5. The provisions of the Convention are also relevant to the cross-sectoral issues reviewed by the Commission on Sustainable Development. In its statement to the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Conference of the Parties noted in particular the relevance of the following cross-sectoral issues on the agenda of the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development: combating poverty; demographic dynamics and sustainability; integrating environment and development in decision-making; environmentally sound management of biotechnology; roles of major groups; financial resources and mechanisms; transfer of technology; science for sustainable development; and information for decision-making.

B. The Convention and chapter 15 of Agenda 21

6. The Convention is the principal global instrument relevant to achieving the goals set out in chapter 15 of Agenda 21, Conservation of Biological Diversity. At its third session, the Commission on Sustainable Development urged States to sign, ratify, accede to and implement the Convention on Biological Diversity. At the time of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, 161 States and one regional economic integration organization had done so, making this Convention the principal instrument for advancing global cooperation and practical action in its field.

7. The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Nassau, the Bahamas, in December 1994, set in place the mechanisms provided for by the Convention. The second meeting, held in Jakarta, Indonesia, in November 1995,

adopted substantive decisions aimed at facilitating the implementation of the Convention.

C. The relevance of the Convention to other chapters of Agenda 21

8. Significant work has already been undertaken or initiated under the Convention in relation to a number of key areas. For example:

(a) National planning processes

9. The Convention requires Parties, in accordance with their particular conditions and capabilities, to develop national strategies, plans and programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties decided that the first national reports of the Parties, due at its fourth meeting, will focus on measures taken for the implementation of article 6 of the Convention (General measures for conservation and sustainable use).

(b) Marine and coastal biological diversity

10. The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties adopted decision II/10 on marine and coastal biological diversity, the Jakarta Mandate. This decision proposed a framework for global action. The salient features of the mandate are:

(i) support for and cooperation with other international efforts;

(ii) development of a programme of work for the Convention process, on the basis of five thematic areas, namely: integrated marine and coastal area management; marine and coastal protected areas; sustainable use of coastal and marine living resources; mariculture; and alien species; and

(iii) the establishment of a roster of experts on the basis of country input, which will draw upon expertise from scientific, technical, technological, social, management, economic, policy, legal and indigenous and traditional knowledge.

11. The first meeting of experts drawn from the roster is to be held in Jakarta early in 1997. The Conference of the Parties also forwarded its decision on marine and coastal biological diversity to the fourth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1996. Integral to the implementation of the Jakarta Mandate will be cooperation with other relevant institutions, processes and international agreements.

(c) Terrestrial biological diversity

12. The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties submitted a statement to the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, and the Conference of the Parties has considered further inputs. The Conference of the Parties has also begun to

consider further work in the area of terrestrial biological diversity, including in relation to drylands and to the biological diversity of mountain regions. At its third meeting, major consideration was given to agricultural biological diversity.

(d) Environmentally sound management of biotechnology

13. Chapter 16 of Agenda 21 addresses the environmentally sound management of biotechnology. The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties established an Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on Biosafety to develop, in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms, a protocol on biosafety, specifically focusing on transboundary movement, of any living modified organism resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, setting out for consideration, in particular, appropriate procedure for advance informed agreement. The Working Group held its first meeting in July 1996 and reported to the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Working Group aims to complete its work by 1998.

(e) Technical and scientific cooperation, and capacity-building

14. A number of articles of the Convention address the issues of technical and scientific cooperation and capacity-building, in which the clearing-house mechanism will play a significant role. The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties reaffirmed the importance of the clearing-house mechanism, accessible to all countries, to support implementation of the Convention at the national level. The Conference of the Parties noted that enhanced cooperation with other information systems and activities would contribute to the development of the clearing-house mechanism. A pilot phase of the clearing-house mechanism was established.

(f) Financial resources

15. The Convention recognizes the need for new and additional financial resources to enable developing country Parties to meet their commitments under the Convention and to benefit from its provisions. The Conference of the Parties has encouraged exploration of availability of additional financial resources, and ways in which the activities of funding institutions might be more supportive of the objectives of the Convention. In this regard, the Conference of the Parties encourages bilateral and multilateral funding agencies to incorporate more fully biological diversity considerations into their activities.

(g) Financial mechanism

16. The Convention foresees that there shall be a mechanism for the provision of financial resources to developing country Parties for the purposes of the Convention. The Conference of the Parties decided at its second meeting that the restructured Global Environment Facility should continue to serve on an interim basis as the institutional structure to operate the financial mechanism under the Convention. It also decided to undertake the first review of the

effectiveness of the financial mechanism at its fourth meeting and to undertake a review every three years thereafter.

17. The Conference of the Parties specifically requested the Global Environment Facility as the interim institutional structure to implement the relevant provisions of the following decisions: II/3 and III/4 on the clearing-house mechanism; II/7 and III/9 on consideration of articles 6 and 8 of the Convention; II/8 on preliminary consideration of components of biological diversity particularly under threat and action which could be taken under the Convention; II/17 on the form and intervals of national reports by Parties; III/10 on identification, monitoring and assessment; III/11 on conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biological diversity; III/14 on implementation of article 8 (j); III/15 on access to genetic resources; III/18 on incentive measures; and III/20 on issues related to biosafety. The additional guidance to the financial mechanism given by the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting is contained in consolidated form in decision III/5.

(h) Major groups

18. The major groups, identified in section 3 of Agenda 21, participate in the processes of the Convention, allowing them an opportunity to engage with Governments over the implementation of the commitments made under the Convention. In particular, certain provisions of the Convention specifically address the interests of indigenous people and their communities, as well as of other local communities.

D. Recent developments

19. The Conference of the Parties also draws to the attention of the special session of the General Assembly the report of its third meeting, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina (document UNEP/CBD/COP/3/38). The third meeting considered, inter alia:

(a) The financial mechanism and financial resources for the effective implementation of the Convention;

(b) Implementation of articles 6 and 8 of the Convention;

(c) The conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biological diversity;

(d) Terrestrial biological diversity;

(e) The implementation of article 8 (j);

(f) Access to genetic resources;

(g) Technology transfer;

(h) The impacts of intellectual property rights on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;

(i) Incentive measures; and

(j) Cooperation with other conventions, institutions and processes.

E. Future work under the Convention

20. The Conference of the Parties draws to the attention of the special session the further work envisaged under the Convention's medium-term programme of work, including such areas as:

(a) Consideration of inland water ecosystems;

(b) Linkages between *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation;

(c) Public awareness and education;

(d) Impact assessment and minimizing adverse impacts;

(e) Matters related to benefit sharing;

(f) Technical and scientific cooperation;

(g) Conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biological diversity;

(h) Forest biological diversity;

(i) Implementation of article 8 (j); and

(j) Indicators and methodologies for assessments.

21. At its fourth meeting, the Conference of the Parties will undertake a longer-term review of the work programme of the Convention and the operation of the Conference of the Parties and subsidiary organs, in the light of progress and experience to date.

F. Cooperation with other conventions, institutions and processes

22. The Conference of the Parties affirms the importance it attaches to cooperation and coordination between the Convention on Biological Diversity and other conventions, institutions and processes of relevance. A number of measures have already been taken to enhance such cooperation, including the agreement of memoranda of cooperation between the Convention secretariat and the secretariats of certain other biological diversity-related conventions. The Conference of the Parties emphasizes its commitment to continue to explore effective mechanisms to cooperate with other conventions, institutions and processes of relevance, and in particular the Commission on Sustainable Development, to avoid duplication and promote efficient use of resources in implementing its objectives and objectives contained in Agenda 21 in an expeditious manner.

G. Future challenges

23. In spite of the progress made to date in implementing the objectives of the Convention, Parties remain aware that biological diversity is being destroyed by human activities at unprecedented rates. The Conference of the Parties notes that a significant amount of work remains to be undertaken, in collaboration with relevant conventions, institutions and processes, in order fully to implement the Convention. It therefore calls upon the special session to recognize the urgency of this work and to support it.

24. In particular, the Conference of the Parties recognizes that attention needs to be paid, inter alia, to:

(a) The further raising of public awareness and the understanding of the importance of biological diversity through educational programmes and information;

(b) The rapid development and implementation of national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;

(c) The consideration of appropriate arrangements for access to genetic resources, and for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of such resources;

(d) The development of effective means to respect, preserve and maintain the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization thereof;

(e) The transfer of and access to technologies relevant to the Convention; and

(f) The provision of new and additional financial resources for the implementation of the Convention.